

RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION & PUBLIC ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS

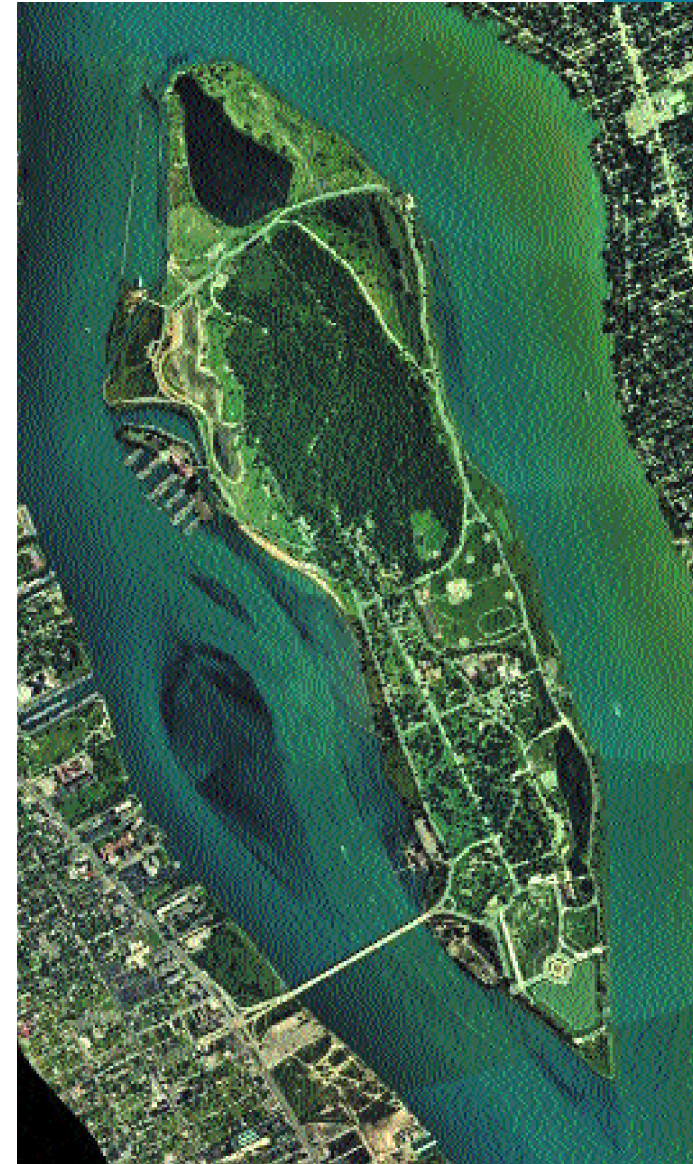
Improving waterfronts is a visible way to rejuvenate communities and bring people down to their riverbanks. Cities and towns grew up from early river settlements, so their history and culture are inextricably tied to their rivers. Many revitalization efforts center around connecting the past with the future, and as a result, they meet all three of the American Heritage River initiative's objectives—economic development, cultural and historic preservation, and environmental restoration and protection.

"Thanks to...the American Heritage Rivers initiative, hundreds of riverside communities have been linked with federal resources and expertise they can use in revitalizing their own river fronts."

Rebecca Wodder, President, American Rivers

BEAUTIFYING BELLE ISLE

In the works for the **Detroit River** is the planned restoration of its 980-acre island park, Belle Isle. Improvements include road reconfiguration, trail improvement, structure restoration, and habitat enhancement. Detroit's Recreation Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), US Forest Service, and several nonprofit organizations are partnering on habitat enhancement along Blue Heron Lagoon in fall of 2000. Detroit's Recreation Department and the Soil Bioengineering Team of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are implementing a demonstration project for soft engineering along Lake Muskoday, beginning in the fall of 2000. A new manual on soft engineering is available online at www.tellusnews.com/ahr/report_cover.html. The navigator has worked to develop proposals for US Department of Transportation (USDOT) support for the Bus Stop on Belle Isle.



Belle Island - Detroit River

RIVER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GREENWAYS, THE RIGHT WAY

The Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative (AHRI-Detroit), along with its community partners, is sketching out plans to incorporate greenways linking the various segments of the **Detroit River** system. The community's vision is for greenways along the river from Lake St. Clair to Lake Erie, across to Canada, and up major tributaries, such as the Rouge River. With the support of AHRI-Detroit, the City of Trenton, MI, secured \$675,700 in state funding this year to construct three riverfront "pocket parks" consistent with its master plan. This new greenways extension will link existing parks with the new "pocket parks" created on City property at street ends along the Detroit River. Connections will also be established between the parks and downtown area in an effort to further economic development and enhance community pride. The river navigator has also helped develop proposals for transportation funding for Downriver Linked Greenways, a keystone project of AHRI-Detroit.

HAPPY TRAILS

There is an active eco-tourism initiative along the **St. Johns River** in Volusia County, FL, and a number of federal agencies have joined to help. The National Park Service's (NPS) Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program is providing facilitation, planning, and design assistance for a county-wide conceptual trail that links environmental, historical, and cultural assets of the area.

BIKING ON THE BROWNFIELDS

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently granted the **Woonasquatucket River** Greenway \$1 million to clean up a portion of the Brownfields Riverside Mills site. Additional resources are still needed to complete the cleanup, establish a heritage trail, and build the first phase of a bike path, which would link Providence to the rest of the watershed. USDOT has funded trail projects along the Woonasquatucket, and local officials plan to use Transportation Enhancement funding for construction of the Blackstone River Bikeway.

WHERE ARE THE BARGES

Along the **Hudson River**, abandoned barges are navigational hazards, and blight on several waterfronts. The State of New York is in the planning phase of conducting an inventory of the abandoned barges to identify the location and impact of each barge. With removal, the danger to other boats will decrease and the visual characteristics of the waterfront will improve.

MEMPHIS MAKEOVER

The City of Memphis, TN, is gearing up for riverfront development along the **Lower Mississippi River**. A 501(c)(3) corporation, Riverfront Development, Inc., has been formed, with initial support of \$14 million to develop and implement a plan for waterfront renewal. This support includes \$316,000 of USDOT Enhancement Program funds, to complete a pedestrian walkway connecting remote Mud Island/Auction Bridge with the Memphis riverfront. The city has applied for an additional \$450,000 to complete the southern end of the pedestrian walkway along the revitalized riverfront. Additionally, the Plough Foundation has pledged \$1.5 million over the next three years to establish infrastructure and marketing plans for this new organization.



Railroad tracks cut off public access to most of the Hudson River.

DONALDSONVILLE RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION

The City of Donaldsonville, LA, has formed a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Ascension Parish Department of Economic Development, Capital Regional Planning Commission (CRPC), U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), and the **Lower Mississippi AHR** to plan, design, and fund a visitor's center and riverfront improvements in Donaldsonville. The city is a tourism gateway to historic plantations along the river in southeast Louisiana and is known as the birthplace of New Orleans-style jazz. Located halfway between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, the city plans to expand a downtown visitor center with exhibits on river transportation; antebellum, Civil War, and Victorian history; and the heritage of the Houma Indians. Both the Corps and CRPC have committed to conduct survey plans for adding a steamboat landing and riverview park, the equivalent of over \$250,000 in federal assistance.

ENHANCING ACCESS TO THE RIVER

Local residents and visitors to downtown Wilkes-Barre, PA, will have easier access to the **Upper Susquehanna River** and a proposed riverfront park, thanks to a major modification to the \$175 million U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Wyoming Valley Levee Raising flood control project. Three cuts, or portals, in the floodwall will be constructed to afford easy pedestrian access to the river for recreation. The agreement also saves nearly one hundred trees on the river commons by authorizing the construction of a concrete-capped rock pile wall rather than an earthen embankment for flood protection in downtown

Wilkes-Barre. The proposed riverfront park is planned to have trails, an amphitheater, boat dock, gardens, and other amenities.

ALONG THE RIVER

The City of Central Falls, RI, received an \$83,000 grant from EDA for the next phase of riverfront redevelopment along the **Blackstone River**. An old building along the river has been taken down, and plans are in the works to rehabilitate the remaining historic mill building to create a center for eco-tourism. Plans include an education center, restaurant, shops, and a waterfront launching area for the Blackstone River Valley Explorer and Canal Boats. Elsewhere, USDOT Enhancement funds are being used for historic preservation and streetscape improvements in Woonsocket, Lincoln, Cumberland, Pawtucket and other Rhode Island communities.

ARCHWAY OF SUCCESS

The City of St. Louis, MO, is currently involved in downtown development plans for the **Upper Mississippi** riverfront. These plans include creating hiking and biking trails, improving access to the riverfront, and adding greenspace. This work also includes the development of a regional Great River Resource Center that will draw national attention to the Upper Mississippi River Region and present the history of river transportation. Revitalization efforts are also well underway in the Quad Cities of Illinois (Rock Island and Moline) and Iowa (Davenport and Bettendorf) including new riverfront trails and parkways along with restoration and reuse of a railway depot and other vacant structures.



The Eads Bridge, St. Louis, Missouri

CROSSING THE RIVER

Just north of the majestic Gateway Arch in St. Louis, MO, stands a monument from another era, the James Buchanan Eads Bridge with its three massive steel arches, linking East St. Louis, IL, and St. Louis, MO. Eads Bridge was completed in 1874 and was the engineering and construction feat of its day, a double-deck bridge for rail, highway, and pedestrian traffic. As the first major crossing of the Mississippi River, the Eads Bridge became a critical link in the transcontinental railroad, and it accelerated St. Louis' development as the "Gateway to the West." One of the **Upper Mississippi River** keystone projects is the addition of a pedestrian promenade. Other planned improvements include adding replicas of the original railings and restoring the brickwork and hanging acorn-style light fixtures. Trailnet, a local nonprofit group, with help from St. Louis Mayor Clarence Harmon, raised over \$1 million in private pledges through a "Save the Eads Bridge" campaign to leverage additional federal and state funding to complete this work.

ST JOHNS HISTORY

A new “Eco-Heritage Corridor” is under development along the entire 310-mile length of the **St. Johns River**. This corridor will emphasize the natural resources of the river as well as the extensive Native and European history of the area. Visitor guides will be developed to attract tourists and outdoor enthusiasts, including an interactive web site, and two separate land-based and water-based guides.

AHEAD OF THE GAME

Regional land trust organizations attended an auction of 11,000 acres of **New River** lands, providing information on conservation easements to individual bidders. As a result of this unique partnership of land trusts, approximately 3,500 acres of critical riverfront properties will be protected through voluntary donation of easements by successful bidders. The New River Community Partners played a key role in fundraising and grant writing toward the purchase of these conservation easements.

MANY STEPS TO RESTORATION

A grand opening celebration in September 2000, drew 50,000 visitors to the \$14.5 million rehabilitation of Harriet Island Regional Park in St. Paul, MN. It includes new recreational facilities, landscaping, and a series of steps that lead directly to the **Upper Mississippi River**. A riverwalk and overlook contain more than 1,500 personalized stepping stones and markers commemorating a community legacy that incorporates a city, its people, and their link to the river.



View of riverfront in St. Paul, Minnesota

“AHR has been a catalyst for shared communications and coordination of local projects and initiatives across a broad spectrum of nearly 200 river communities and organizations. Local governments and diverse public, private and nonprofit river organizations are now working together on several fronts, including a continuous Mississippi River trail system, habitat restoration, and improved marketing of the river for redevelopment and tourism. We believe these specific collaborative efforts and others like them will have a lasting impact on this great river and the people who live and work along it. AHR is an important part of making that happen.”

Linda Henning, Community Partner, Twin Cities, MN



Riverfront improvements at Harriet Island Regional Park, St. Paul, Minnesota - Upper Mississippi River.



Fourth of July Riverfest, Hartford, CT.

RECAPTURING THE RIVER

It is not surprising that the number of downtown Hartford, CT, visitors continues to grow, after a decade of work by the local nonprofit, Riverfront Recapture. The city had long turned its back on the **Connecticut River**, but dedicated businesses and citizens decided to transform the riverfront into a vibrant place for people to work, live, and play and a showcase to attract new businesses. By 1999, a record half million visited the new riverfront attractions. The 15-day visit in August 2000, of a full-size replica of the historical sailing ship *Amistad*, drew more than 110,000 people. The October 2000 rowing headrace on the river included hundreds of rowers from around the Northeast – and a high school crew team from South Africa. From a new downtown dock, the tour boat *Mark Twain* now runs scheduled trips and charters through the Christmas holiday season. City leaders have seen for themselves how a revitalized riverfront can attract new residents, businesses, and tourists, enhancing overall quality of life of the region.

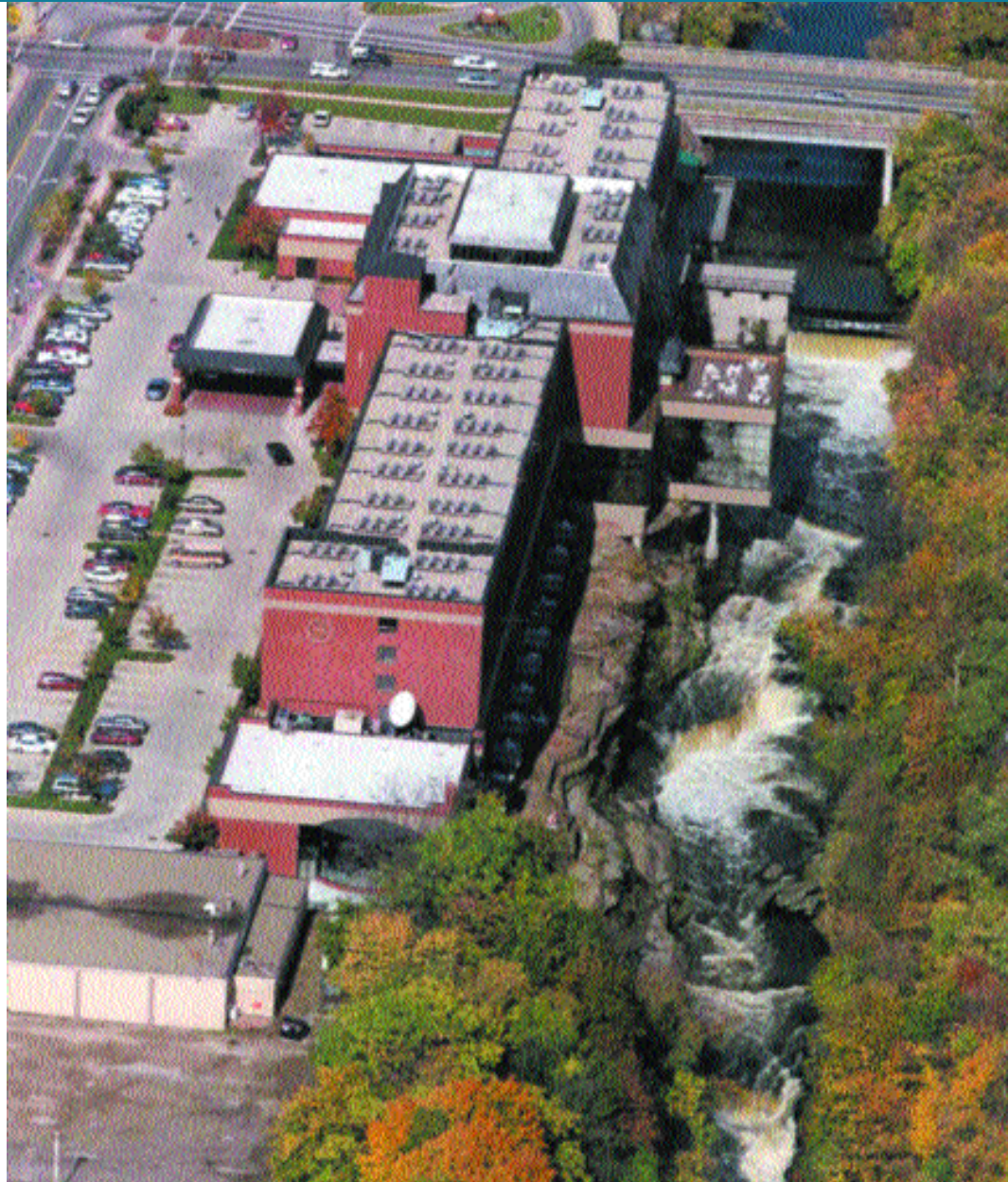


Aerial view of Minneapolis, Minnesota - Upper Mississippi River, Minneapolis is revitalizing its downtown riverfront with parkways and open space, preservation of historical structures, and both housing and economic development.

BRIDGING THE MISSISSIPPI

Thanks to funding from the McKnight Foundation, a project is underway linking individual efforts of the 58 communities that make up the **Upper Mississippi** AHR between Bemidji, MN, and St. Louis, MO. “Bridging the River” is providing a way for people to learn about each other’s work and reconnect river communities with the great Mississippi. The University of Minnesota’s Center for Urban and Regional Affairs is leading the effort in partnership with other colleges and universities in the region. In 1999, for example, conferences in Rock Island, IL, and St. Paul, MN, brought together river activists, developers of trails and greenways,

and community development specialists from local governments and nonprofits throughout the area. They agreed on an idea to create a continuous series of trails from the headwaters down to St. Louis. Four “bridges” have been built to support an operational upper Mississippi network: an annual conference, a listserver, a website (www.missriver.umn.edu), and facilitation of regional projects. Information sharing, collaborative partnerships, and increased understanding of the role of the river in the region’s identity, economy, and livability have resulted from this project so far.



Cuyahoga Falls

Habitat Restoration & Protection

Natural heritage is just as important as cultural heritage when it comes to maintaining a community's sense of place. Many of the American Heritage Rivers' communities cited habitat restoration and protection as priority goals, and this section highlights some of their early accomplishments.

MAKING THE SHORELINES SOFTER

Efforts are underway to reshape the shoreline of the **Detroit River** using soft engineering techniques, incorporating natural features rather than concrete, rock, or timber bulkheads, for example. In November 1999, the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative held a conference to examine the options of soft engineering. Businesses and communities along the river have implemented ten soft-engineering demonstration projects to showcase these economically and environmentally beneficial practices to maintain the riverbanks and the habitat they provide, vital to protecting navigation, private property, and fish and wildlife.

HOW TO REMOVE THE HAU?

The Environmental Protection Agency's "5-Star" habitat restoration grant program provided \$13,000 for the **Hanalei River** community to devise the best way to remove hau, an invasive bush (*Hibiscus tiliaceus*). This ubiquitous weed grows all along the banks of the river. It exacerbates flooding and has replaced native plants that provide river's edge, or riparian, habitat. Both hau removal and replanting the riverbanks with native species will be conducted experimentally using several different techniques. The study will aim to determine which method of removal, revegetation, and maintenance is the most effective as well as environmentally sound. Results will be used to develop and carry out a riparian management plan for the entire lower Hanalei River watershed.

ANIMAL TRACKS

A major priority for the **Hudson River** community is to expand knowledge about what plants and animals live along the river, as well as implement a study on ecosystem health, an underwater habitat inventory, and various habitat restoration programs. Planners anticipate these studies to reveal more effective ways to resolve environmental issues on the river.

FROM MINE-SCARRED LAND TO NEW SOCCER FIELDS

The Rural Abandoned Mine Program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provided \$200,000 to transform 20 acres of mine-scarred land into several soccer and football fields, basketball courts, and a walking trail in the **Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna** Watershed's Hanover Township. The U.S. Soccer Foundation agreed to assist in the design and engineering of the fields. Construction will be completed by summer 2001, when this formerly abused and damaged land will provide recreation and enjoyment to residents for years to come.

SAFE PASSAGE

A project is underway along the **Blackstone River** to restore fish passage along its lower four dams. With a planning grant from the State of Rhode Island, dam owners, environmental groups, and experts on fish passage will convene to explore options for removing fish blockages. In addition, a major marsh restoration project is planned for 2001 in Lincoln, RI, for migratory and resident species of fish.

BREACHING THE DAMS

Fish passage has been a top habitat restoration priority in the Cuyahoga River watershed. The City of Akron, OH, recently removed several small six-foot dams along the Little **Cuyahoga River** as part of a brownfield rehabilitation at the old Continental Tire factory. The River Navigator was part of the Kent Dam Advisory Committee, which implemented a bypass around the existing dam, thus opening up the Cuyahoga River to fish passage and improving aquatic habitat. A similar dam study is also underway for the Munroe Falls dam and the Rt. 82 dam, located downstream.

RECONNECTING THE CONNECTICUT

In an effort to restore riverine habitat in southern New Hampshire and in support of the **Connecticut River** Keystone Project, the McGoldrick Dam will be removed from the Ashuelot River. This effort will be the first dam removal carried out in New Hampshire. The planning for the dam removal, management of the permit process, and securing the project funding has been a collaborative effort carried out by federal and state agencies, along with Conservation Law Foundation, American Rivers, Trout Unlimited, Coastal Conservation Association, Cold Water Fisheries Coalition, and the national AHR Task Force. Funding for this dam removal is coming from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), FWS, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), NH Department of Environmental Services, and NH Fish and Game. Two additional dams on the Ashuelot River are under consideration for removal. The collective impact of removing these three dams from the Ashuelot will be the reconnection of over 30 river miles of fragmented fish habitat.



Volunteers participating in habitat restoration on the Cuyahoga River.

TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

The **Woonasquatucket River** Watershed Council aims to link six river communities by developing a Green Space Inventory, thanks to a \$100,000 grant from the US Forest Service through the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The inventory will identify all the critical environmental, cultural and historic locations within the watershed for potential protection, acquisition, and revitalization.

CONFLUENCE COOPERATION

A salmon critical habitat area along the **Willamette River** is its confluence with the McKenzie River, immediately adjacent to the communities of Eugene and Springfield, OR. One of the Willamette keystone projects is restoration of salmon habitat in this confluence. The Willamette river navigator worked with the McKenzie River Watershed Council to ensure that a key federal partner—the Planning Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers—brings its habitat restoration expertise to the collaborative project-development process.

NONCONNAH CREEK GREENWAY

Officials from the Public Works Departments of the City of Memphis, TN, and Shelby County, TN, the Memphis Park Commission, and the Army Corps of Engineers have agreed to conduct coordinated design and planning efforts for the hiking and nature trail component of the Corps Flood Control Project for Nonconnah Creek in the **Lower Mississippi River** designated area. With this

agreement, the planned trail system increased from the original 8.8 miles in the city to over 27 miles into Shelby County. The system will include trails, connecting greenbelts and amenities along the main channel of the creek.

WOLF RIVER RESTORATION

A related project in the **Lower Mississippi River** is a hiking and nature trail along the Wolf River just north of Memphis, TN. The Army Corps of Engineers and Memphis have partnered with the Wolf River Conservancy to survey, establish, and mark a nature trail of almost 12 miles along the river. The Conservancy is acquiring the land to balance protection of wildlife habitat and native hardwood stands with residential development along the river. The Corps is modifying some of the previous flood control configurations to mitigate erosion and streambank collapse.

HEADWATERS HELP

In Ashe County, NC, a partnership effort is underway to restore an aquatic ecosystem at the abandoned Ore Knob Copper Mine in the Peak Creek area of the **New River** headwaters. Peak Creek is biologically sterile due to acid mine drainage. A project to improve water quality and restore fish and wildlife is under development by a team of experts from NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, The Conservation Fund, USDA, and the New River Community Partners, working with the US Army Corps of Engineers. The project will divert drainage around contaminated areas, isolate mine tailings, and passively treat polluted discharge.

RESTORATION AT THE BEND

The Laredo, TX, “El Portal” riverfront project received a shot in the arm with the US Army Corps of Engineers announcement to commit approximately \$2 million to match the City’s \$1 million for restoring 140 acres along the banks of the **Rio Grande**. The riverfront park, an AHR keystone project, is a proposed 8-mile greenbelt on the banks of the Rio Grande and will connect two historic neighborhoods adjacent to Laredo’s cultural center. The Corps project will remove exotic plants, revegetate the area with native species, and convert several abandoned quarry pits into an interconnected wetlands system linked to the river, providing important migratory bird habitat. Eventually, the restored land will provide the cornerstone for a system of hike-and-bike trails along the river.

THIS ONE’S FOR THE BIRDS

The **New River** Community Partners, along with the Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust, the North Carolina Chapter of the Audubon Society, and the Conservation Trust for NC, are working toward purchasing 219 acres on the northwest face of Bullhead Mountain in Alleghany County, NC. Bullhead Mountain has been identified as an Audubon Important Bird Area and has the potential to become one of the premier hawk-watching sites in eastern North America, primarily due to its significant geology and the formation of updrafts along its long northeast-southwest ridge.

OPEN PLACES, GREEN SPACES

A Twin Cities Metro Greenways project administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has provided \$5.8 million in state funds since 1998 to purchase land or conservation easements for ecologically-significant areas and to protect undeveloped land. Funding has been granted for several greenspace planning and acquisition efforts in and around the **Upper Mississippi River** corridor.

STABILIZING THE CONNECTICUT

EPA awarded a \$50,000 grant to enhance riverbank stability along the **Connecticut River**. The funds are supporting the efforts of the Connecticut River Watershed Council and the Connecticut River Joint Commissions to implement the sustainable riverbank component of the Connecticut American Heritage River Action Plan. Fourteen federal agencies, through the New England Federal Partners for Natural Resources, have made implementation of the Connecticut River Action Plan one of their main priorities.

GOBY LOVE

The **Hanalei River** community has received help from the Hawaii State Department of Aquatic Resources to establish the Hanalei Long-Term Ecological Monitoring Program. This action comes in response to community concerns about the health of the indigenous goby ('o'opu nakea) fish population, and to engage the community in river stewardship through environmental education and community-based underwater monitoring of the spawning stocks of this fish and the habitat it depends upon.

IN THE HEART OF THE CITY

Nahant Marsh is a unique 513-acre urban wetland adjacent to the Mississippi River, owned by the City of Davenport, IA. Restoration of the marsh is a keystone project of the **Upper Mississippi AHR**. River Action, a local nonprofit organization, has led efforts to convert the wetland from its previous use as a shooting range for a local sportsmen's association into the Nahant Marsh Outdoor Education and Research Center. The FWS documented this area as a source of waterfowl lead poisoning, and EPA has approved a \$2 million project to remove lead-contaminated soil and sediment. River Action is overseeing the restoration work. A team of AmeriCorps volunteers has added decking and railings to the framework of a boardwalk and viewing platform constructed by local builders.



Volunteers Cleaning up trash along the Potomac River.

LAND TRUST WORKSHOP

The **Potomac River** navigator assisted the Potomac Conservancy and others with the first Potomac Land Trust Workshop in October 1999. The purpose of this workshop, attended by 45 watershed leaders, was to strengthen collective efforts of the land trust community to work with private landowners and public officials on voluntary land conservation and restoration efforts.



Blue Cypress Conservation Area - St. Johns River

Water Quality & Quantity

Without water flowing, there would be no rivers. Without clean water flowing, there would be poorly functioning rivers, devoid of the full diversity of life they can sustain. This section identifies a sampling of projects underway in communities working to reverse decades of declining water quality in some cases and working to maintain the healthy and diverse waters they currently enjoy in other cases.

TAKING BACK THE BLACK LAGOON

Plans are underway to restore the **Detroit River's** "Black Lagoon," an area of the river that is heavily polluted with PCBs, oils, grease, and heavy metals. Approximately \$1 million has been designated as funding for contaminated sediment remediation and to develop new ways to restore fish and wildlife habitat. Organizers of the effort hope that by removing 30,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment, this area of the river will once again flourish.

WE WANT CLEAN WATER

The **Hanalei** Heritage River Program is conducting a water quality monitoring program for fecal coliform bacteria in Hanalei Bay, on the island of Kauai in Hawaii. The community is concerned about poor water quality during the summer. Preliminary results suggest that while some contaminants may be coming from transient boats, the majority of it is coming from the Hanalei River itself.



Young volunteers removing trash from the Blackstone River.

TAKING THE BLACK OUT OF THE BLACKSTONE

A group of communities, local partners, and state and federal agencies have joined to request funding for the headwaters of the **Blackstone River** (Worcester and Shrewsbury, MA) from EPA's Environmental Monitoring for Public Access and Community Tracking Program. This program would provide the public with real-time information on water quality in both public beaches and in the river and suggest ways to mitigate storm water problems. Federal and state transportation funds are also being used for statewide storm drainage improvement and restoration activities.

HYDRILLA THE HUNGRY

The **Rio Grande** literally stopped flowing near its mouth at Brownsville, TX, in early March 2000. The condition required an emergency release of water from upstream reservoirs to ensure sufficient water was reaching water supply intake lines for the city of Matamoros, Mexico. The perpetrator is an exotic aquatic species, hydrilla, along with the water hyacinth, the world's worst aquatic weed. The US Bureau of Reclamation office in Austin, TX, is assisting the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Southwest Texas State University in an experiment to introduce triploid grass carp as a way to eradicate the hydrilla. Mexico has objected to the use of herbicides as a solution, and previous mechanical harvesting methods have proven costly and ineffective.

IT TAKES A CREW

The **Hudson River** navigator has joined with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, NY Sea Grant College Program, and a number of other river-based organizations to develop a pilot program to address river pollution from boats, marinas, and other boat launch areas. The program has been dubbed the “Mariner’s” program. It is important that the many marina operators and boating associations are aware of the data, resources, and information related to how boating affects the river. A better-informed boating industry and boaters can improve communication between natural resource managers and the many users of waterways. Knowledgeable mariners can also become important educators in the larger river community explaining how everyone can protect the river. The St. Johns River navigator is joining the Hudson to test the concept. Planners hope to make it a prototype for a nationwide partnership program, as there is already interest from several federal agencies and the Marina Operators Association of America.

WATERSHED WORK

The Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI), the primary community partner for the **Willamette River** in Oregon, has issued a set of recommendations for restoring the health of the watershed. To prepare for its implementation, the WRI Executive Director, WRI Board members, the river navigator, and other federal and state agency partners are identifying the steps and resources needed to implement the recommendations.



Scenic view of the Hudson River.

RIVER REMEDIATION

Negotiations are underway between the **Cuyahoga River** Remedial Action Plan (RAP), an organization serving as the local community partner, and the US Army Corps of Engineers to address the poor water quality of the Cuyahoga navigation channel in Cleveland, OH. At the mouth of the Cuyahoga, low dissolved oxygen, erosion, and metal barrier walls plague this 5.6-mile channel. Planners are working to improve fish habitat in the river using innovative bioengineering solutions.

WASTEWATER

Along the **Rio Grande**, in the cities of Presidio, TX, and Ojinaga, Mexico, sewage treatment capacity has not kept up with population increases on both sides of the border. NAFTA-spurred growth in the area will exceed current treatment capacity. Together with the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission and the North American Development Bank, the Rio Grande Institute successfully expedited action on grant funding required constructing a new treatment plant in Presidio. Community partners are also seeking “land treatment” grants to simultaneously treat wastes and bring back fish and wildlife habitat by planting trees and creating wetlands to treat the wastewater.

HURRAY FOR THE USDA

In April 2000, USDA's Rural Development agency approved \$6.7 million for a sewage treatment project in Hazle Township, PA, located within the **Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna River** watershed. This project will serve 1,500 people and will treat 150,000 gallons of wastewater per day. Planners expect this project to ensure continued environmentally sound growth for the town, as well as improve the overall health of the Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna Watershed and the Chesapeake Bay downstream.

NEW RIVER COLLABORATIVE

The New River Community Partners have joined with the National Park Service, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, and the US Army Corps of Engineers to expand efforts of the New River Collaborative. The New River Collaborative is a partnership formed to reduce the quantity of solid waste entering the New in West Virginia between the Bluestone Dam and the mouth of the river, including the scenic New River Gorge. The New River Community Partners have championed a strategy to expand this effort throughout the **New River** watershed upstream in Virginia and North Carolina. A watershed approach to reduce pollution from the headwaters to the mouth of the New, a distance of over 250 miles, is an important cooperative activity to sustain the entire New River.



Members of the New River Community Partners.

"The American Heritage River initiative has been, in my opinion, one of the greatest opportunities that ever happened to this area of the New River watershed."

Patrick Woodie, Executive Director, New River Community Partners, Sparta, NC

RURAL ROAD RUNOFF REDUCTIONS

The USDA Forest Service provided a small grant for rural counties in the **Cuyahoga River** watershed to produce a pollution prevention guide. This brochure will lay out new operating procedures for rural road maintenance that minimize erosion and reduce polluted runoff, thereby protecting aquatic habitat in streams and tributaries of the Cuyahoga from the effects of sedimentation.

ATTACKING ACID

Late last year, federal funding was obtained to restore Sugarloaf Creek, which ultimately flows into the **Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna River**. The goal of clean-up efforts is to eliminate acid mine drainage to the river, which has prevented recreation and harmed fish and aquatic life for over 80 years. The reclamation work will be a collaborative effort by the Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation, the Office of Surface Mining, the Schuylkill and Columbia Counties Conservation Districts, the PA Department of Environmental Protection, and many others. Funding was provided by federal agencies, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the EPA.



View of Old Forge Outfall - Lackawanna River acid mine drainage.

BASS TOURNAMENT

"The Nation's River" Bass Tournament was held on June 9, 2000, to recognize the importance of clean water, the value of the recovered **Potomac River** largemouth bass sportfishery, and the role American sportsmen and women have played in the conservation and clean-up of the Potomac. The Friends of the Potomac, Alexandria Seaport Foundation, National Park Service, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sponsored the event. Private sponsors included Waste Management, Inc., Potomac Electric Power Company, Clark Construction Group Inc., US Airways, and Fannie Mae.



Fisherman on the Potomac River.



1969 photo of the Cuyahoga River on fire.

DEBRIS DOWN UNDER

At the request of the town of Kent, OH, the **Cuyahoga River** Navigator assisted in resolving a long-term dispute between the town and a regional railroad. An old railroad trestle no longer in use was catching woody debris flowing downriver, the same problem that led to the Cuyahoga catching on fire in 1969. The debris was blocking navigation and leading to undercutting of the riverbanks. After public review, the railroad solved the source of the problems by agreeing to remove the trestle.

PICTURE IT BETTER TOGETHER

The Hartford, CT, Council of Governments is coordinating a project to preserve the quality of life in rural, suburban, and urban areas by focusing on better transportation planning and economic development strategies. The partnership includes local, state, and federal agencies and nongovernmental groups like the **Connecticut River** Watershed Council. This effort is

supported by a \$480,000 Transportation and Community and Systems Preservation grant from USDOT. Projects include the Hartford-New Britain Busway, a Downtown Circulator Study, the development of a Regional Transit Strategy, and a study of the corridor north of Hartford leading to an expanding Bradley International Airport.

DISASTER MITIGATION

A regional disaster mitigation planning effort is underway in the lower **Rio Grande** region thanks to a grant provided by FEMA to the Rio Grande Institute. More than 20 communities have joined this planning effort aimed at identifying assets at risk and securing support for measures to mitigate hazards. A tabletop exercise is planned for the City of Brownsville to simulate a natural disaster and the region's ability to respond in a coordinated fashion.

"I strongly support the American Heritage Rivers initiative, which encourages the federal government to think broadly in terms of river basins, yet relies on local priorities and partnerships. AHR and FEMA's Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities program share a common goal: that communities must live with nature, and not compete against it."
James Lee Witt, Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency

SOFTENING NANTICOKE CREEK WATERS

The US Army Corps of Engineers provided \$600,000 in February 2000, to determine the ideal method of cleaning up the Nanticoke Creek watershed in the **Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna** watershed. It currently suffers from acid mine drainage that has killed all aquatic and plant life in the creek.

TO SEWER OR NOT TO SEWER

As the largest city in the continental US area wise (841 sq. mi.), Jacksonville, FL, neighborhoods are spread out widely which presents challenges for treating wastewater. Homes in the far reaches of the city were built with septic tanks rather than hooking up to centralized sewage treatment facilities. In many cases, the septic tanks are failing and contributing to pollution of the **St. Johns River** and its tributaries. As part of a local initiative, sewer lines will be laid in the most critical areas. Through a four-year joint funding agreement between the City of Jacksonville and the US Geological Survey, the USGS will provide \$240,000 to study water quality changes before and after remediation.



River Navigator, Barbara Elkus with John Burns and Ish Edwards, St. Johns River Water Management District, investigating aquatic vegetation on the St. Johns River.

Economic Development

The American Heritage Rivers initiative forms a basis for communities to improve their local economies while also protecting the quality of their environment. To remain livable, these towns, cities, counties, and states have joined forces with government at all levels, nonprofit organizations, universities, and industry to create business opportunities and new jobs. The projects summarized below demonstrate the success of federal agencies working together with local stakeholders to plan and implement the vision of river communities for more sustainable places to live.

“The American Heritage Rivers initiative helps communities focus on economic development programs along the rivers and gives them greater access to a wider and better coordinated assortment of federal agencies for help. Sounds like a good idea to me.”

US Representative Sherwood L. Boehlert (R-NY)

TURNING A BROWNFIELD GREEN

One of Greater Detroit’s American Heritage River priorities is the implementation of a model brownfield redevelopment project in Southeast Michigan. Under consideration is a 200-acre site in the cities of Riverview and Trenton, which if restored, would allow for mixed-use redevelopment on the large property. Additionally, it would open up 1.2 miles of prime riverfront property along the **Detroit River**.

QUICK LIKE A CATSKILL

A \$2.8M plan is in the works for Catskill, New York, to rehabilitate a warehouse into a community/market exhibit hall, restore the former freight master’s office, rebuild the bulkheads, and create space for walking paths, food carts, and possible entertainment on lawn areas. This riverfront revitalization project for the **Hudson River** is now underway, thanks to the river navigator’s help in facilitating the permit process.

A VISION FOR BROWNSVILLE

With the help of the Rio Grande river navigator, the City of Brownsville developed a coordinated program for renewal and revitalization of the area around the **Rio Grande** known as the River Initiative. The plan includes restoration of the city’s network of resacas (oxbows), revitalization of the downtown historic district, expansion of Audubon’s Sabal Palm Sanctuary, construction of a visitors’ center at Palo Alto Battlefield, and creation of a system of trails and parks linking these attractions.

THIRSTY TARO

During a 100-year flood event in 1995, the **Hanalei River** jumped its bank and much of the river diverted into this cutoff, leaving a greatly diminished flow at the FWS Hanalei Wildlife Refuge intake. This intake supplies all the taro farmers within the refuge with their irrigation water. Two attempts have been made to divert the water to its original course, but they have been temporary measures and more effective short and long term solutions are needed. The Fish & Wildlife Service is the lead agency in proposing and financing this repair. This project remains a keystone project of the local Hanalei Heritage River Program.

MARK TWAIN AND THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Hannibal, Missouri, has prepared a new vision for its waterfront, featured in the books of Mark Twain, who was known as Samuel Clemens when he grew up near this **Upper Mississippi** town. The city is building on improvements at Glascok’s Landing, adding new bike paths and moving forward with continuing reclamation, restoration, and redevelopment of its historic riverfront.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

The Oregon Department of State Lands has been charged with completing a “Multi-Objective Study” of the **Willamette River** near the communities of Salem and Independence. State funding for the study, however, will only be available if federal funds are also available. Local officials, the Willamette River Navigator, and the US Army Corps of Engineers have developed a proposal for joint funding of this study.



Dixon Tomato Plant - New Orleans, Louisiana.

GOING BACK TO THE BOOKS

A partnership consisting of the New Orleans School Board, City of New Orleans, Xavier University, Tulane University, EPA, US Coast Guard, Booker T. Washington High School, Army Corps of Engineers, Economic Development Administration, and the **Lower Mississippi American Heritage River Alliance** has formed to expand the vocational training facilities at Booker T. Washington High School in New Orleans. This project includes transferring a “brownfield” property located next to the high school from Xavier University to the City of New Orleans and constructing a state-of-the-art vocational training facility for the high school and the surrounding community. EPA has completed a Phase I brownfield assessment of the site and the Army Corps of Engineers plans to complete the Phase II assessment in 2001. The American Heritage River Alliance, through partnership with the City of New Orleans, is assisting by identifying federal assistance for this project. The cumulative amount of resources acquired for this project so far (donations, services, etc.) is equivalent to \$585,000.



Booker T. Washington High School - New Orleans, Louisiana.

“Thanks to the AHR initiative, the entire City of New Orleans now has a newfound appreciation for the Mississippi River, one of our greatest treasures and resources. Through local river action plans and federal support, we have integrated economic development with environmental protection to promote a renaissance on the river.”

Mayor Marc H. Morial, New Orleans, LA

LANDING IN WILKE-BARRE

Planning is underway to build an interactive museum complex called the Susquehanna River Landing in downtown Wilkes-Barre, PA. This new facility, a key component of revitalizing the riverfront, is envisioned to attract people to downtown Wilkes-Barre and reconnect them with the river that shaped the area’s history. The **Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna AHR** has secured initial funding for a museum architecture firm to start work on design and exhibit plans. This project will be the third of ten planned “landing” sites built along the Delaware and Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor, which stretches from the Susquehanna to the Delaware River. The proposal is to make new use of an existing downtown landmark—the Irem Temple Mosque. The Landing will offer local residents and visitors historical exhibits about the region, directions on attractions and places to visit, dine, and shop, an IMAX- type theater, and interactive exhibits on science and technology.



Aerial photo of Richard Island proposed site for Wyoming Valley Education and Recreation facilities.



Illustration of proposed Wyoming Valley Education and Recreation Center Project - Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna River.

RIVER RESIDENTS

The Rio Grande Institute, a nonprofit organization and AHR partner funded through a Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant, is coordinating a series of affordable-housing fairs for five communities along the **Rio Grande**. The fairs will target first-time homebuyers and will bring together several federal partners (HUD, EDA, and USDA-Rural Development), state housing agencies, local banks, and local homebuilders to assist the public in applying for federal housing assistance and programs.

HAGERSTOWN SUPERFUND REDEVELOPMENT PILOT

The Friends of the Potomac and the **Potomac River Navigator** are working with the City of Hagerstown, MD, EPA, and other local and state officials on the Superfund Redevelopment Pilot for the Central Chemical Corporation site in Hagerstown. Although specific actions have not been determined, the restoration of this site offers opportunities for economic development of the area.

WATER WATER JOBS JOBS EVERYWHERE

In St. Paul, MN, plans are underway to convert a 26-acre former industrial site to a mixed-use development known as Upper Landing Urban Village, which would create 650 rental and for-sale housing units, 23,000 square feet of commercial space and a plaza in the downtown river corridor. The Twin Cities communities of Hastings, Anoka, South St. Paul, and others are actively implementing riverfront revitalization projects to create or enhance their communities' links to the **Upper Mississippi River** through improved public access, emphasis on history or culture, and/or redevelopment of old industrial areas.

"...as a result of this initiative, people are returning to the river and seeking to integrate it into their daily lives. The communities in my district are working to invest in riverfront development projects that share the story of their communities' past while also stimulating much-needed economic development."

US Representative Ron Kind (D-WI)

Cultural & Historic Preservation

A community's sense of place is defined by its landscape, its waterways, its buildings, the way its towns and countryside mingle, and its history and culture. Maintaining a community's sense of place requires holding onto tangible examples of local culture and other reminders of its past. Many of the examples below illustrate how culture and history intersect with the lives of people in river communities, past, present, and future.

GRAND EXCURSIONS

The planned re-creation of an 1854 steamboat excursion has been publicly announced and appropriately named the Grand Excursion 2004. The original tour, led by President Millard Fillmore, steamed north on the **Upper Mississippi River** from the Quad Cities of IA and IL to the Twin Cities of MN. Two dozen river communities have agreed to participate, providing added momentum to finish riverfront projects that can be showcased as the flotilla of boats makes its way up the Mississippi. This event will provide a major opportunity to reintroduce the Mississippi River and the Upper Midwest to the rest of the Nation as a good place to visit, live, and do business.

STORMING THE FORT FOR RESTORATION

Situated on the **Detroit River**, historic Fort Wayne is a recent focus of the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative. Built in the 19th century, it sits on 83 acres, has a half mile of shoreline, and is comprised of over 40 buildings. Detroit's river

navigator has helped the community build up its capacity to restore and reopen the fort. Through the efforts of both the US Department of the Interior and the City of Detroit, among others, the fort's rich history will be preserved and accessible to all.

THE TIES THAT BIND

The **Connecticut River** AHR has been successful in building a partnership with the National Park Service, which has committed \$10,000 to the Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC). The 50-plus groups that make up the CRWC plan to establish a Connecticut River Heritage Network, explore the possibility of becoming a National Heritage Corridor, and work cooperatively with the four watershed states to develop a plan for packaging and marketing the Connecticut River Valley as a tourist destination.



Historic Cornish-Windsor Bridge - Connecticut River.



[left to right] Jane Sherman, Executive Director of the Providence Plan and Johanna Hunter at SlaterMill - The Blackstone River.

ACT ONE

Progress is underway for the first phase of construction on the Stadium Theatre, which is adjacent to the **Blackstone River**. This \$900,000 project will restore this historic building located on downtown Woonsocket's main street. The Stadium Theatre organization received a \$450,00 from EDA to begin restoration of one of Rhode Island's oldest theaters.



Illustration of the Historic McCreery Hotel in Hinton, West Virginia.

"The Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative is an excellent tool to leverage funds to help make community priorities a reality. For example, in 2000, we implemented two stewardship projects on our 980-acre Belle Isle Park where federal resources were used to leverage state, business and local resources to restore the shoreline of Blue Heron Lagoon. Both of these projects involved hundreds of volunteer adults and children in shoreline restoration and helped teach everyone about their role in caring for the crown jewel of Detroit's park system."

Mayor Dennis Archer, Detroit, MI

RECYCLING OLD INTO NEW

Restoration work is underway at the historic McCreery Hotel, built in 1907 in Hinton, WV. Support for the job has come from American Heritage River partners, including the New River Community Partners, HUD, USDA, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. Situated on the **New River**, the hotel will provide assisted living facilities for low and moderate-income senior residents of the area. The hotel will also be the cornerstone for economic revitalization in this historic railroad town. The redevelopment project will create a minimum of 15 new full-time jobs and 6,000 square feet of prime new retail space. The revitalized riverfront and related businesses are expected to attract 75 full-time residents to the heart of Hinton's downtown.



Interior view of Silk Mill, Lonaconing Maryland.

GREENING TODD

With the help of the **New River** Community Partners (NRCP) and many community monetary and time donations, the village of Todd, North Carolina, successfully nominated their historic commercial district to the National Register of Historic Places. NRCP has also secured \$50,000 in funding from the State Division of Parks and Recreation for the development of Todd Island Park, an 8-acre parcel in the middle of the South Fork of the New River. Acquired for the community, it has been set aside for community space.

LONACONING SILK MILL

In 1957, a silk mill in the small **Potomac River** town of Lonaconing, MD, went out of business. Over the years, the building changed hands but was not destroyed or converted to other uses as happened with other mills of this type. The mill has remained intact with all of its machines still in place. The town would like to adapt and reuse the mill and to preserve a portion as a cultural and historical example of Western Maryland's past. The town of Lonaconing worked with Friends of the Potomac and the Potomac River navigator and hosted a community partner workshop where over 80 federal, state, and local residents gathered to explore options to save the mill. A product of the workshop was the decision by the Town and County to link the silk mill project with the recently established Western Maryland Coal Heritage Tour to promote heritage tourism. By the fall of 2000, Friends of the Potomac had helped convene five more similar planning workshops in other parts of the watershed through its Community Partners Workshop program, and it will partner on eight more workshops by September 2001, supported by a \$287,000 grant from EPA.



Fort Jackson, Plaquemines parish, Louisiana - lower Mississippi River.

SAVING OUR HISTORY

Plaquemines Parish is working with the State of Louisiana, the Louisiana National Guard, and the US Navy Sea Bees to renovate historic Fort Jackson, located near the mouth of the **Lower Mississippi River**. This fort was one of two key posts in the defense of New Orleans from a Union invasion during the Civil War. In a critical battle, the Union Navy fought their way past this fort, ultimately taking New Orleans. This partnership is planning a state park, perhaps eventually a National Military Park, with a surrounding 500-acre wildlife preserve. This project not only can save a key historic site and recover wetlands and other habitats, but it may also act as the new southern terminus of the Mississippi River Trail, the hiking and biking trail that extends from Minnesota to Louisiana.



Outrigger canoe on the Hanalei River.

MILLING AROUND THE UPPER MISS

On the central riverfront on the **Upper Mississippi River** near downtown Minneapolis, MN, nearly 1,000 housing units have been built or are under construction, many historic buildings have been preserved, and key park and trail projects completed. An illustrative project is the West Side Milling District in the core of the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, where the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has undertaken an archaeological dig to expose the foundations of the water power system and flour mills that made Minneapolis the "Mill City." The end result will be Mill Ruins Park, an urban archaeological

interpretive park adjacent to a recently completed link in the Great River Road. Recently designated a National Scenic By-way, the Great River Road is a series of highways and by-ways following the Mississippi River along its course from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. The Minnesota Historical Society will soon begin construction of the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Center, a major interpretive center which has been designated a "Save America's Treasures" project and will be built within the ruin walls. Vacant historic buildings are being rehabilitated for loft housing, and compatible new construction housing is also planned.

PALO ALTO HERITAGE CENTER

In Texas, the Brownsville Community Foundation and Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site have spearheaded a private/public partnership to secure funding to construct a heritage center at the battlefield site commemorating the first battle of the US-Mexican War. The Houston Endowment has provided a \$500,000 grant to match \$1.8 million in National Park Service funds to begin construction of the center in this lower **Rio Grande** region. The center will provide educational opportunities for local residents and area visitors, as well as spur economic revitalization for the Brownsville area.

Education & Outreach

River communities have developed displays, held festivals, and run media campaigns to celebrate their river heritage and educate people about river environments. Accomplishments in this section cover this kind of traditional education, but they also lay out how communities are organizing themselves, creating new communication tools, and reaching out to diverse stakeholders in their regions. This outreach has helped communities use their new knowledge to envision the future for their rivers. Communities are using education and outreach to equip people with the will and know-how to make improvements to their local environment, their regional economies, and the preservation of their cultural heritage.

"This is a grassroots, community-driven program that is working to bring awareness to the designated rivers,"

Pat Northey, Council Member, Volusia, Florida



Public Education Signs and Murals - Woonasquatucket River.

HANALEI TELEVISION

The **Hanalei** Heritage River Program through a grant from the Gerbode Foundation and with the cooperation of local videographers and the public access television station, Ho'ike, produces regularly scheduled broadcasts of educational and informational issues affecting the community and resources of the Hanalei area. These have become a very popular way for residents to learn about what is happening in Hanalei and has encouraged many to participate in discussions and volunteer opportunities.

PASSPORT TO SUCCESS

Together with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the **Connecticut River**/Long Island Sound Ecosystem Team is developing an Ecosystem Passport program. This program seeks to enhance public awareness of the river, increase support, and encourage public visitation and volunteerism at wildlife refuges and other protected areas in the watershed. Visitors to the various locations will receive unique stamps in their ecosystem passports for their participation in volunteer activities.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The Woonasquatucket AHR Steering Committee has changed its name to the **Woonasquatucket River** Watershed Council. The community members on the Council have worked to expand membership, create a map showing the unique natural, cultural, historic, and recreational assets within this Rhode Island watershed, and seek local

support to improve the river and its adjacent communities. The Council will be able to hire a full-time coordinator thanks to a \$30,000 grant from EPA's national Watershed Assistance Grant (WAG) program administered by the nonprofit organization, River Network.

GIS GUIDES

The **Hanalei** Heritage River Program has compiled a Geographic Information System (GIS) database of the Hanalei Watershed with help from a summer 2000 intern from Duke University. The primary purpose of the GIS project is to educate the community on watershed resources and to provide them with a tracking tool to detect changes over time. A new watershed coordinator with GIS expertise has been hired to help maintain and expand the GIS database and to train community members to make maps, add data, and run analyses with the new system.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN RIVER LEGACY

The National Park Service and the International Network to Freedom Association, in collaboration with Friends of the **Potomac**, published *The Potomac River: A Guide To African American Heritage*. The guide uses narrative and geographic information to celebrate the network of sites related to African American heritage along the river. The guide shows the link between African Americans and the Potomac River and helps to promote recognition of cultural sensitivity and appreciation for America's heritage.

LEADERSHIP POTOMAC

The Friends of the **Potomac River** have created Leadership Potomac, an education program that will annually train 25-35 community leaders in the watershed. Funded through tuition and a \$25,000 EPA grant, the curriculum includes training in ecology, leadership, and negotiation skills. The goal of the program is to enable community leaders from government, industry, and private groups to work cooperatively toward decisions that will benefit the Potomac watershed.

COMMUNITY POWER

A 1905 coal-fired electric power plant along the **Upper Susquehanna River** near Wilkes-Barre, PA, has been targeted for a major revitalization effort. The Wyoming Valley West School District and others seek to transform this abandoned and dilapidated facility into a multi-faceted educational, training, and recreation complex, offering an alternative learning center for at-risk youth, early childhood development programs, vocational education, workforce training, and environmental training and science labs. By restoring this blighted industrial site and cleaning up its chemical contaminants, planners hope to unite community educators and improve the local economy. Preliminary environmental and feasibility analyses have been funded by the local not-for-profit Youth Services of Pennsylvania, and Quad III, an engineering and architectural firm, has provided pro bono services.

IT PAYS TO HAVE A PLAN

A reconnaissance-level hazard mitigation plan for the **New River** was completed in May 2000. It was the first-of-its-kind watershed-based planning project funded in the Nation, with \$400,000 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It was also the first to integrate hazard mitigation and natural resource and water quality protection priorities. A comprehensive map of the New River watershed has also been developed, the first GIS-based mapping and compilation of data on land uses and other geographic data for the river. Recommendations addressed safety, mitigation, environmental, and social issues, including the location of emergency shelters and low-income housing in the New River floodplain.

COMMUNICATING ON THE CUYAHOGA

Two traveling interpretive exhibits were developed and used by the **Cuyahoga River** Navigator and community partners at many waterfront festivals and events: Upper Cuyahoga Riverscape, Great Lakes Science Center Water Lake Festival, Riverday 2000, Cleveland Waterfront Coalition, Earth Day festivals, and the 1999 opening of the newly constructed Cleveland Metroparks Canal Visitor Center in Cuyahoga Heights, Ohio. The displays chronicle the history of a polluted river and the efforts of the local communities to restore its health. This outreach resulted in local news stories and a national story in the New York Times which featured the river navigator and highlighted the remarkable renaissance of this Ohio river—infamous for burning in 1969 and, as a result, becoming a symbol for the national campaign to pass the 1972 Clean Water Act. To expand outreach efforts, the US Forest Service gave \$37,000 to local counties and cities in the Cuyahoga River watershed to create an interpretive plan, brochure, and new displays.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER DISCOVERY CENTER

This dramatic new national river interpretation and education center, located in Dubuque, IA, across the **Upper Mississippi River** from the Illinois-Wisconsin border, is an American Heritage River keystone project. When completed, the Center will include a restored wetland, world-class interpretive exhibits, river walk, amphitheater, and a river's edge plaza. In addition to the important riverfront revitalization for Dubuque, it will also create a regional center for visitors to learn about one of our Nation's most valuable commercial transportation arteries and one of our most treasured natural resources.

MINNESOTA'S MISSISSIPPI

In St. Paul, the new \$100 million Science Museum of Minnesota opened on the downtown riverfront in late 1999, with 11 acres of exhibit space. It includes a Mississippi River Gallery created in partnership with the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. The River Gallery, a highlight of the museum, covers a wide range of historical, geological, environmental, cultural and engineering stories as it leads visitors from the headwaters of the **Upper Mississippi River** at Lake Itasca to Lock and Dam #8 at the Minnesota-Iowa border. Under development are interactive science exhibits located in the museum's new riverfront outdoor space. A new public park between the museum and the river will also be created.

FORMING A COALITION

Citizens representing communities, local business, environmental organizations, and state and federal agencies joined together to participate on the Blackstone River Expedition, a 4-day, 48-mile trek down the entire length on the **Blackstone River**. This Expedition kicked off the formation of a bi-state coalition to sponsor local projects to improve the Blackstone River and watershed. The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor helped lead the effort to bring together nearly 500 people to learn more about the challenges and opportunities for the Blackstone.

WEBBING ON THE RIO

Public Television Station KLRN in San Antonio, TX, is exploring ways to bring Internet-based educational materials for K-12 teachers and students in communities along the **Rio Grande**. The focus of this website information parallels the three major objectives of the American Heritage River initiative: natural resource conservation and environmental protection; preservation of historical and cultural heritage; and economic revitalization.



River lovers canoeing down the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.



Smokey the Bear and river enthusiasts at the Blackstone River Expedition 2000.



SHOW AND TELL

The **Willamette River** community partners are planning a self-guided tour of habitat and water quality restoration projects throughout the watershed. The US Bureau of Land Management is supporting the design and construction of signs and other interpretive materials related to restoration projects. The US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Army Corps of Engineers are also planning placement of educational signs at their facilities in the basin. A brochure and other outreach activities will tie together the system of interpretive signs.

THINK CLEAN WATER

A collaboration of over 40 nonprofit, private, and public organizations called "WaterShed Partners," funded by the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities, has created a traveling exhibit and kiosk. These displays have demonstrated watershed management principles and practices to over 400,000 people in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area of the **Upper Mississippi River**. WaterShed Partners also completed Phase I of a media campaign, "Think Clean Water," to educate the general public on everyday household practices that can prevent polluted runoff. The program has already targeted 2.5 million residents. A citizen-based volunteer program to monitor water quality in streams and tributaries is the most recent project undertaken by this partnership.

FARMING 101

The **New River** Community Partners helped obtain \$20,000 from USDA, which will match in-kind donations from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service to establish a regional sustainable agriculture program in North Carolina and Virginia counties. This program will also work closely with local public schools to develop an aquaculture education program in the high schools.

STEWARDSHIP STUDIES

In 1999, the National Park Service and the nonprofit environmental education organization, Wilderness Inquiry, successfully launched the "Passport" Program in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area of the **Upper Mississippi River**. Plans are to expand it in 2001 and beyond. This program encourages family-based river stewardship by providing a wide variety of low-cost river experiences to metro-area residents and visitors.

"The Mississippi River is the great artery of America and is unrivaled as a place of work and industriousness. With the support and expertise of the American Heritage Rivers initiative, the National River Institute of the Mississippi will create the first world-class science and research institute dedicated to the study of rivers."

Scott S. Cowen, President, Tulane University

RESEARCHING THE RIVER

Tulane and Xavier Universities, the City and Port of New Orleans, Audubon Institute, State of Louisiana, Army Corps of Engineers, **Lower Mississippi** American Heritage Rivers Alliance, and others have formed a partnership to design and construct a state-of-the-art interpretive, learning, and research center devoted to the Mississippi River and located in New Orleans. The project has generated interest from other cities along the river, such as Natchez and Vicksburg, MS, Memphis, TN, and Dubuque, IA, where satellite facilities could eventually be established. The partnership envisions it to become a world-class cultural repository, heritage museum, learning center, and research institute focusing on the river's hydrology, history, culture, ecology, and other topics to serve the entire Mississippi River Valley and, in the future, support national and global river-related interests.



Mississippi River Delta- showing main passes - Lower Mississippi River

A Community Outreach Success Story

“The new Hartford, CT, riverfront is becoming a special place – a place where water’s magical appeal brings together people of very different backgrounds to enjoy the magnificent natural beauty of our Connecticut American Heritage River. It is becoming a place where people experience personal discovery and growth, a place where people learn to appreciate the wonders of our natural environment – in the shadow of an urban skyline.

“The Riverfront also is becoming a place that offers young people the possibility of life-changing experiences. The August 2000 issue of Reader’s Digest featured the success story of George Colon, a former Bellevue Square resident whose life was transformed when Riverfront Recapture taught him how to fish. Fishing the Connecticut from Hartford’s downtown waterfront has

brought countless positive changes to this young man’s life. George decided eight years ago that he could use fishing as a tool to help him focus on a positive goal – becoming the first person in his family to graduate from high school – which he accomplished in June 2000.

“George’s story is not an isolated one. Hartford Police Officer Richard Rodriguez tells us that his summer job with Riverfront Recapture as a Riverfront boat-builder was more than an opportunity to earn some spending money. It kept him out of trouble – and, he says, ‘It saved my life.’ When this

vital program was threatened due to lack of funding, Officer Rodriguez simply said, ‘No, this program cannot be cut.’ He led the way in his community and secured the necessary funding to keep the youth boat-building program afloat, which today continues to thrive, producing rowing shells that support an active number of local rowing clubs. Members of our crew teams at Hartford Public and Bulkeley High Schools are going on to college – Yale, Harvard, West Point, the Air Force Academy, and Smith.”

Joe Marfuggi, President and CEO, Riverfront Recapture, Hartford, Connecticut



Hartford, Connecticut riverfront



Crew practice, on the Connecticut River.

This important initiative is strengthening community relationships across geographic, political and cultural lines, to protect and preserve the natural resources that have given America its unique river culture. The initiative is a success because it is cultivating a new generation of Americans who are determined to work together at the local, state and federal levels to improve our Nation's rivers.